

**Proclaiming National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October**

Across the nation, great progress has been made in the fight against breast cancer. However, nationwide, 1 in 8 women continue to be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their lifetime.

In the last two decades, there has been a 30 percent decrease in mortality rates from breast cancer in California, attributed to improved diagnosis and treatment combined with earlier detection through increased screening and awareness. Yet, in the County of Los Angeles, nearly 6,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 1,145 will die from this disease in 2012. Breast cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths and the leading cause of cancer-related premature deaths in women in the County of Los Angeles.

Health disparities are notable when comparing the number of new cases with mortality rates. White women have the highest number of new cases but African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than women of any other racial or ethnic group. In addition, even as overall death rates continue to decrease, mortality rates among Asian women have increased slightly in the last decade.

Knowing what may contribute to breast cancer is an important part of its prevention. Risk factors for breast cancer include family and personal history, radiation

**- M O R E -**

MOTION

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2012  
PAGE 2**

therapy to the chest for previous cancers, obesity and certain genetic changes. Being cognizant of these possible risk factors, as well as maintaining a healthy body weight and balanced diet, exercising regularly, and getting regular screenings contribute to lowering the chances of developing breast cancer. Women and men should speak with their health care provider about their risks and what they can do to mitigate these risks.

Screenings and early detection are also essential components in the fight against breast cancer. When the cancer is confined to the breast, the five-year survival rate for women is over 95 percent. Since there are often no symptoms or signs present in the beginning stages of breast cancer, early detection through regular mammograms is crucial. For women ages 40 and over, annual clinical breast exams by health care providers and regular mammograms every one to two years are the most effective ways of early detection for breast cancer, when it may be easier to treat. Women at higher risk of breast cancer should discuss with their health care providers whether they need mammograms before age 40, as well as the frequency of the mammograms. Regular mammograms, followed by timely treatment if breast cancer is diagnosed, can help improve the chances of surviving this disease.

Free or low cost mammograms are available to low income and/or uninsured women who call the Los Angeles County – Office of Women’s Health’s multi-lingual appointment and referral hotline at 1-800-793-8090. In addition, <http://www.cancer.gov> provides useful information about the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of breast and other cancers.

During the month of October, breast cancer survivors and those currently fighting this disease should be acknowledged for their courage and resilience. Also, the dedicated providers and researchers working to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease through prevention, early detection, and scientific research should be commended for their hard work.

**- M O R E -**

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

- 1) Proclaim the month of October 2012 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month in the County of Los Angeles;
- 2) Encourage health facilities throughout the County of Los Angeles to increase outreach and education about breast health to all women and, where possible, extend breast screening clinic hours;
- 3) Encourage women and men to follow the recommendations for monthly self examination, annual check-ups and regular mammograms for early detections for breast cancer; and
- 4) Call upon government officials, businesses, communities, health care professionals, researchers, educators and all the people throughout the County of Los Angeles to continue the strong commitment to detecting and curing breast cancer and to raise awareness of breast cancer by speaking with family members and friends about the importance of screening and early detection.

**###**